

DEMIAN
THE STORY OF
EMIL SINCLAIR'S YOUTH

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be capable of renouncing these desires or feel wholly justified in having them. Once you are able to make your request in such a way that you will be quite certain of its fulfillment, then the fulfillment will come. But at present you alternate between desire and renunciation and are afraid all the time. All that must be overcome. Let me tell you a story."

And she told me about a youth who had fallen in love with a planet. He stood by the sea, stretched out his arms and prayed to the planet, dreamed of it, and directed all his thoughts to it. But he knew, or felt he knew, that a star cannot be embraced by a human being. He considered it to be his fate to love a heavenly body without any hope of fulfillment and out of this insight he constructed an entire philosophy of renunciation and silent, faithful suffering that would improve and purify him. Yet all his dreams reached the planet. Once he stood again on the high cliff at night by the sea and gazed at the planet and burned with love for it. And at the height of his longing he leaped into the emptiness toward the planet, but at the instant of leaping "it's impossible" flashed once more through his mind. There he lay on the shore, shattered. He had not understood how to love. If at the instant of leaping he had had the strength of faith in the fulfillment of his love he would have soared into the heights and been united with the star.

"Love must not entreat," she added, "or demand. Love must have the strength to become certain within itself. Then it ceases merely to be attracted and begins to attract. Sinclair, your love is attracted to me. Once it begins to attract me, I will come. I will not make a gift of myself, I must be won."

Another time she told me a different story, concerning a lover whose love was unrequited. He withdrew completely within himself, believing his love would consume him. The world became lost to him, he no longer noticed blue sky and green woods, he no longer heard the brook murmur; his ears had turned deaf to the notes of the harp: nothing mattered any more; he had become poor and wretched. Yet his love increased and he would rather have

died or been ruined than renounce possessing this beautiful woman. Then he felt that his passion had consumed everything else within him and become so strong, so magnetic that the beautiful woman must follow. She came to him and he stood with outstretched arms ready to draw her to him. As she stood before him she was completely transformed and with awe he felt and saw that he had won back all he had previously lost. She stood before him and surrendered herself to him and sky, forest, and brook all came toward him in new and resplendent colors, belonged to him, and spoke to him in his own language. And instead of merely winning a woman he embraced the entire world and every star in heaven glowed within him and sparkled with joy in his soul. He had loved and had found himself. But most people love to lose themselves.

My love for Frau Eva seemed to fill my whole life. But every day it manifested itself differently. Sometimes I felt certain that it was not she as a person whom I was attracted to and yearned for with all my being, but that she existed only as a metaphor of my inner self, a metaphor whose sole purpose was to lead me more deeply into myself. Things she said often sounded like replies from my subconscious to questions that tormented me. There were other moments when I sat beside her and burned with sensual desire and kissed objects she had touched. And little by little, sensual and spiritual love, reality and symbol began to overlap. Then it would happen that as I thought about her in my room at home in tranquil intimacy I felt her hand in mine and her lips touching my lips. Or I would be at her house, would look into her face and hear her voice, yet not know whether she was real or a dream. I began to sense how one can possess a love constantly and eternally. I would have an insight while reading a book—and this would feel the same as Eva's kiss. She caressed my hair and smiled at me affectionately and this felt like taking a step forward within myself. Everything significant and full of fate for me adopted her form. She could transform herself into any of my thoughts and each of my thoughts could be transformed into her.

I had been apprehensive about the Christmas vacation